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THE NAVY'S PART

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"But it is not only in those few glittering, deadly hours of action which rivet all eyes that the strain falls upon the Navy . . .



BLOCKADE

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RECONNAISSANCE



RECONNAISSANCE

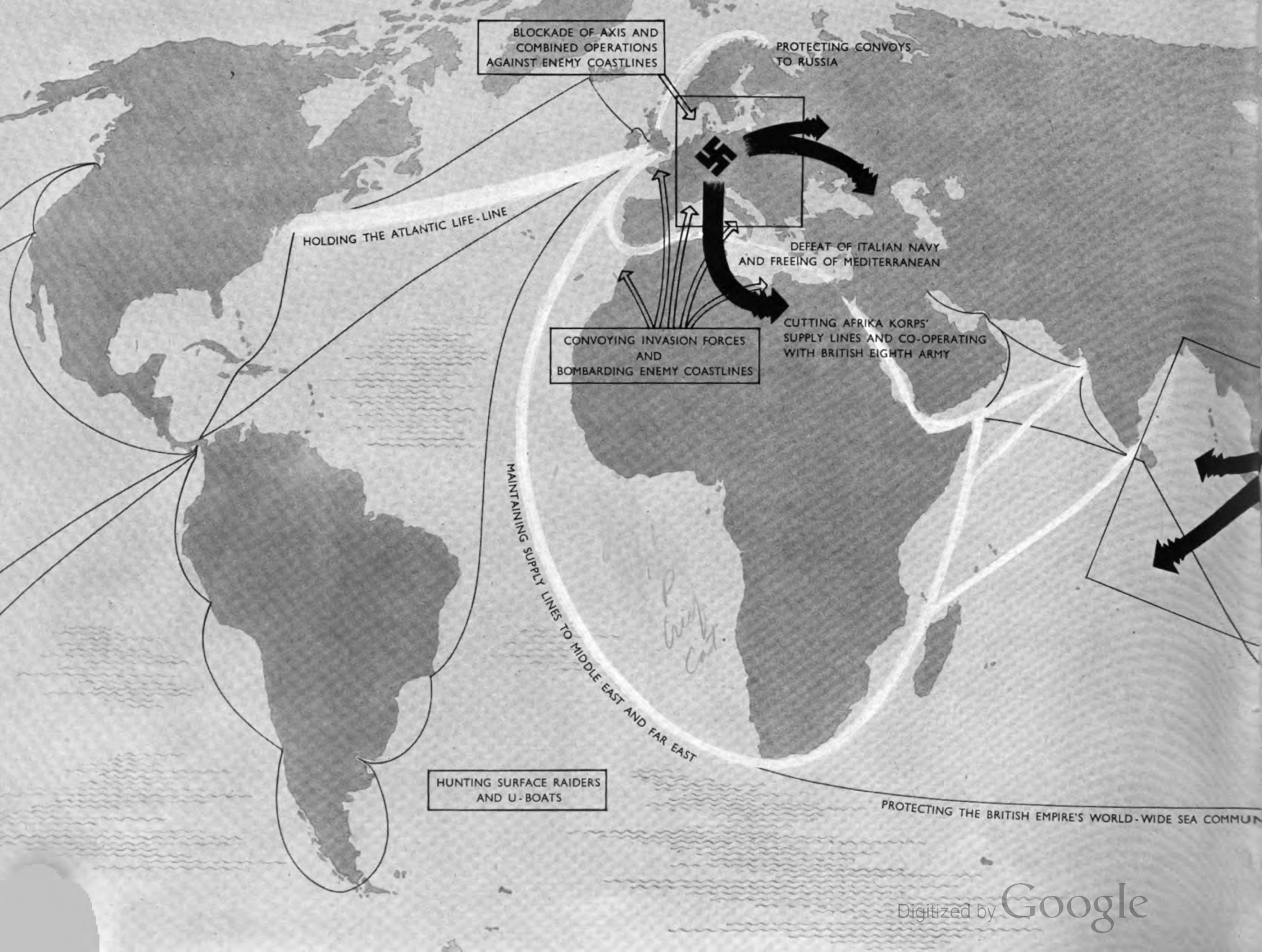


SURPRISE



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ATTACK



BLOCKADE OF AXIS AND
COMBINED OPERATIONS
AGAINST ENEMY COASTLINES

PROTECTING CONVOYS
TO RUSSIA

HOLDING THE ATLANTIC LIFE-LINE

DEFEAT OF ITALIAN NAVY
AND FREEING OF MEDITERRANEAN

CONVOYING INVASION FORCES
AND
BOMBARDING ENEMY COASTLINES

CUTTING AFRIKA KORPS'
SUPPLY LINES AND CO-OPERATING
WITH BRITISH EIGHTH ARMY

MAINTAINING SUPPLY LINES TO MIDDLE EAST AND FAR EAST

HUNTING SURFACE RAIDERS
AND U-BOATS

PROTECTING THE BRITISH EMPIRE'S WORLD-WIDE SEA COMMUN

THE NAVY'S PART

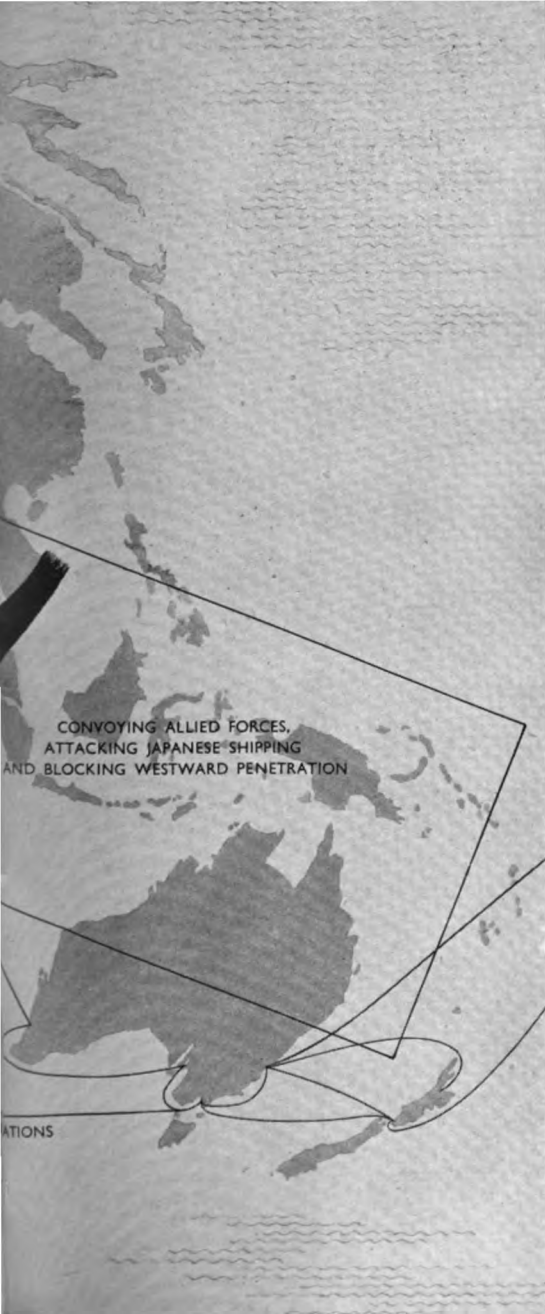
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*"We must regard the struggle at sea as the foundation
of all the efforts of the United Nations.
If they lost that, all else would be denied to them."*

THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL, SEPTEMBER 1942

AN ATTEMPT TO ANALYSE *the part played by the British Navy in the first four
and a half years of the European war, not only in the protection of Britain but in
defence of the whole free world; and to pay a tribute—however inadequate—to
one of the most heroically sustained fighting actions in the whole history of war.*

No attempt has been made in this book to particularize the various units which make up British naval power. Under the general term "the British Navy" are comprised the combined forces of the Royal Navy, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Australian Navy, the Royal New Zealand Navy, the South African Naval Forces and the Royal Indian Navy. It should also be placed on record that men and ships of many nations overrun by the enemy have, since 1940, sailed with their British Allies.





“We are a seafaring race,
and we understand the call of the sea.”

THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL



THE BRITISH PEOPLE *dearly love a naval victory. Their great sailors—and there have been many of them—inspire an affectionate reverence which is only rarely accorded to a prominent military or political figure. They belong to the British people in an oddly personal sense, due in part to the fact that Britain has for centuries looked to the sea for her strength, and in part to the fact—less tangible, but no less potent—that there is inborn in*

every Englishman a feeling for the sea which makes even the veriest landsman a potential sailor.

Out of this feeling for the sea came the epic of Dunkirk—one of the most significant episodes of the European war. The collapse of Belgium left a whole British army in peril—pinned against the sea by the oncoming Nazi hordes. But to Britain the sea has never been an enemy. To the British people it presented itself as the obvious way out of the difficulty. And so they went out in ships of every conceivable size and type—from naval craft and merchant ships to small yachts, fishing-smacks and motor-boats—and snatched

their army back to safety. The achievement of marshalling, from small fishing villages and great commercial docks, from rivers, creeks and inlets over a large area of Britain, so huge and varied a flotilla, of supplying it and keeping it supplied with crews and fuel, and of lifting off the beaches, without the help of quays or jetties, a whole British army and 112,500 French and other allied troops, was one which could have been accomplished only by a nation possessed of that genius for the sea which is the heritage of the British people.

And Dunkirk demonstrated, far more conclusively than could any amount of

FROBISHER HAWKINS DRAKE
NELSON JELlicoe CUNNINGHAM
Their lives span four hundred years' unbroken tradition.

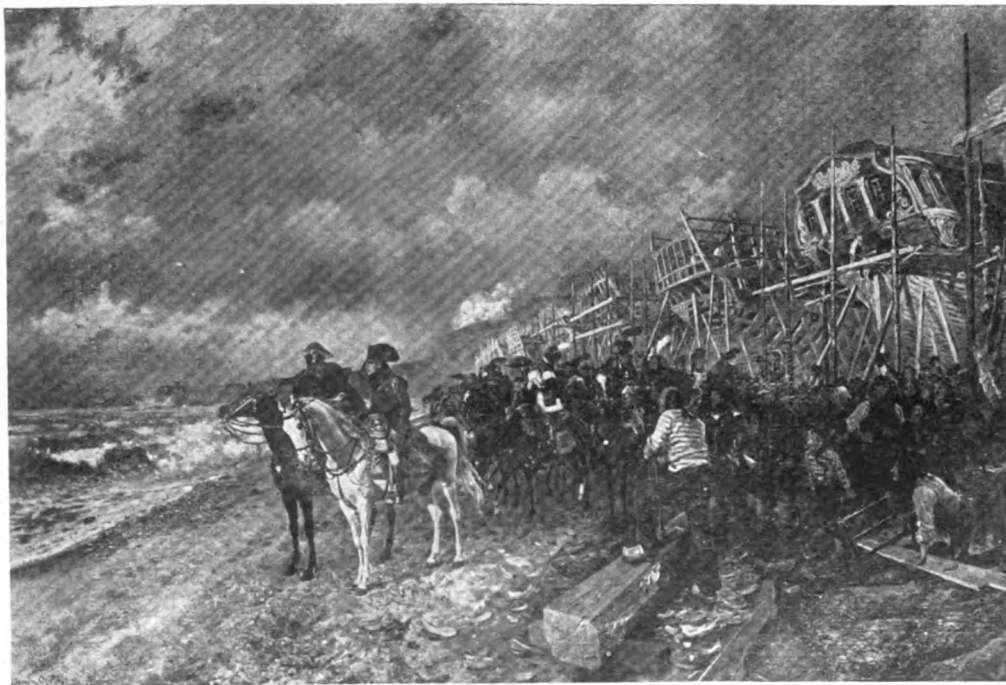
historical thesis, the fact that sea power, properly used, must inevitably give the final strategic advantage.

Hitler's war strategy was based on irresistible land and air forces. That strategy took him far in 1940-41. It gave him the whole coastline of western Europe

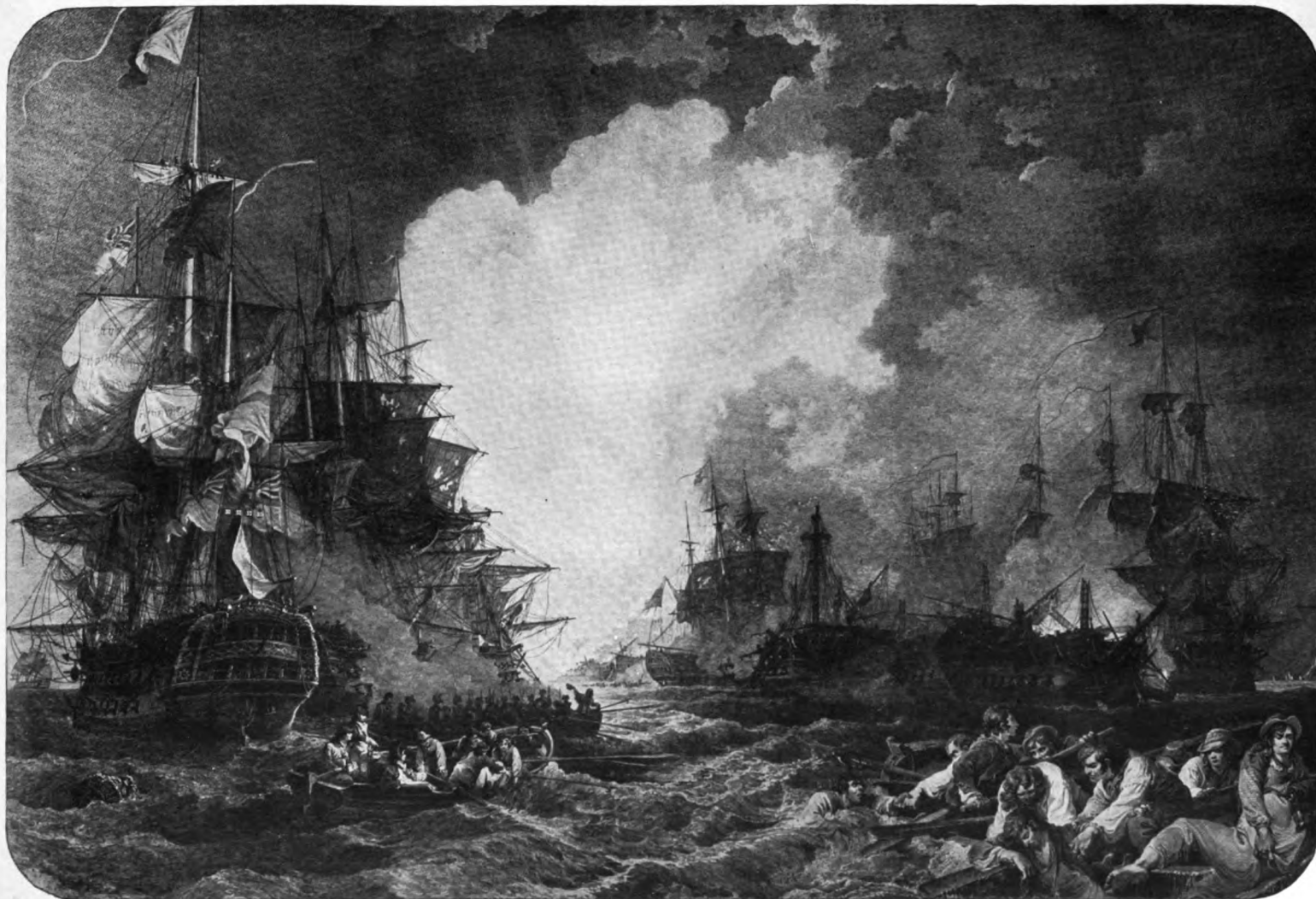
from Hammerfest to Bayonne. It gave him, with his Axis partner, the Mediterranean shores from Perpignan to the Bosphorus. But when he reached the sea, the tide of his successes began to turn. For wherever land met water, the Axis met British sea power. Hitler is not the first

adventurer who has swept across Europe like a destroying flame, only to have his ambitions quenched by salt water.

From the time of the Armada, Britain has stubbornly resisted all attempts at sea-borne invasion. Even when, in the days of Napoleon, the whole of continental Europe was dominated by France, British sea power still held sway in all the seas of the world, its operations being cut short only by the enemy coastline. Between the years 1803 and 1805, Britain, not for the last time in her history, was without allies. Napoleon, at peace with the rest of Europe, and in possession of the most powerful army in the world, was entirely free to concentrate upon the invasion and defeat of Britain. Had he been able to get his armies across the Channel, victory would have been certain. But always the British Navy stood in the way—as it has stood in the way of would-be invaders ever since—



On the beach at Boulogne, 1804.



THE BATTLE OF THE NILE

and Britain survived, to become the focal point of the European resistance which eventually destroyed Napoleon.

Already, British sea power had shown its ability to check the movements of Napoleon's armies when, in 1798, the Fleet, under Lord Nelson, sailed for the Mediterranean, then under French control, and destroyed the French fleet at the mouth of the Nile. At the time, Napoleon was in Egypt, and it had seemed that the path to Constantinople and India lay open to him. But after Nelson's decisive victory—the Battle of the Nile, which restored to Britain her power in the Mediterranean—his Oriental ambitions came to an abrupt end, and, leaving his armies trapped in Egypt, he slipped back to France, to become all-powerful in continental Europe, but unable, because of British sea power, to turn success into victory.

The deadlock became an uneasy peace—a peace which was shattered as soon as it became evident that Napoleon interpreted it to mean the retirement of Britain behind her invincible Navy, while he remained free to annex such territories as



NAPOLEON at St. Helena

took his fancy. So once again Britain went to war in defence of the small States of Europe—a war in which Napoleon held every advantage but the essential one. In retaliation, he resorted to blockade, which proved to be his downfall. His attempt—as part of this scheme—to annex Spain

against the will of its people brought against him not only Spanish, but British armies based in Portugal and maintained by British sea power. In desperation, Napoleon marched eastward to Russia and disaster. Overwhelming land power had been nullified by British sea power.

The parallels between the war against Napoleon and the war against Hitler are obvious. The British Navy—powerful in all the seas of the world, ready to strike the enemy when and where he least expects it, while effectively guarding the coasts and co-ordinating the war efforts of the Allies—has once again proved itself superior strategically to the land-based power of a continental aggressor.

In the following chapters some attempt has been made to describe the achievements of the Navy during the first four and a half years of the European war—years during which Britain swung over from a seemingly hopeless struggle for survival to a rapidly growing offensive—and to relate those achievements to the general events of a war which, without the British Navy, would have gone very differently for the United Nations.

WHAT IS THE NAVY'S PART?

“ . . . the foundation of all the efforts of the United Nations. . . ”.

COMMUNICATIONS DOMINATE WAR. So much so, that if the British Navy had confined its activities during the first four years to maintaining the communications, first of the Empire, later of the United Nations, and to destroying those of the enemy, its contribution to the war against the Axis would still have been an essential and a primary one—one of the greatest and most comprehensive contributions made by any individual fighting force of any one of the United Nations.

It is certainly no exaggeration to say that, without the British Navy, the United Nations would not now be victorious in Europe: indeed, it is unlikely

that without the work of the Navy they could ever have come into existence, or, having come into existence, could have functioned as an efficient fighting force. Germany, if not outright victorious in 1940 or later, would in all probability have been able to dictate a truce on terms more or less satisfactory to herself; at the best, the United Nations could only have hoped for a long, exhausting war which would certainly have dragged on for many weary years beyond the point at which it has now ended.

To analyse the contribution of the Navy in the total struggle one must first

assess that of Great Britain. What has Great Britain done?

(1) Great Britain frustrated complete land control in Europe in 1940 and 1941, which the Germans were then within sight of gaining.

(2) In those first years of her resistance, she was unable to hit back at Germany very effectively; nevertheless, the fact that she was prepared to maintain the struggle served as a great encouragement to powerful neutrals who afterwards entered the war, while her resistance rallied the underground forces of occupied territories.

(3) She enforced a blockade which, in

Where the British Sea Lords assemble ; the Board Room at the Admiralty.

course of time, weakened and embarrassed Germany.

(4) She used the time gained to arm and equip powerful forces, with which she held the vital Middle Eastern territories and increased the Germans' military responsibilities in the occupied countries.

(5) She blocked the right hand of the pincer movement on Russia.

(6) She became the base for the supply of armaments to Russia.

(7) She became the base of operations for the most powerful air forces ever put into action, which devastated German industry and pinned down in Germany an immense number of people who would otherwise have been hurled into the fight against Russia, and against the Allied forces in Italy and Western Europe.



(8) She played the principal part in the freeing of Africa and a major part in the liberation of the Italian peninsula.

(9) She became the base for the attack through France upon German-occupied Europe.

These achievements sum up to a total

contribution to the war effort without which the United Nations could not possibly occupy the position they do to-day.

And in all these feats the British Navy has played an indispensable part—a key part, in fact, in the total war effort of the United Nations against the Axis.

SEPTEMBER 1939—JULY 1941

DISASTER AND ISOLATION

"There will not be in this war any period when the seas will be completely safe; but neither will there be, I believe, any period when the full, necessary traffic of the Allies cannot be carried on. We shall suffer and we shall suffer continuously, but . . . in the end we shall break their hearts."

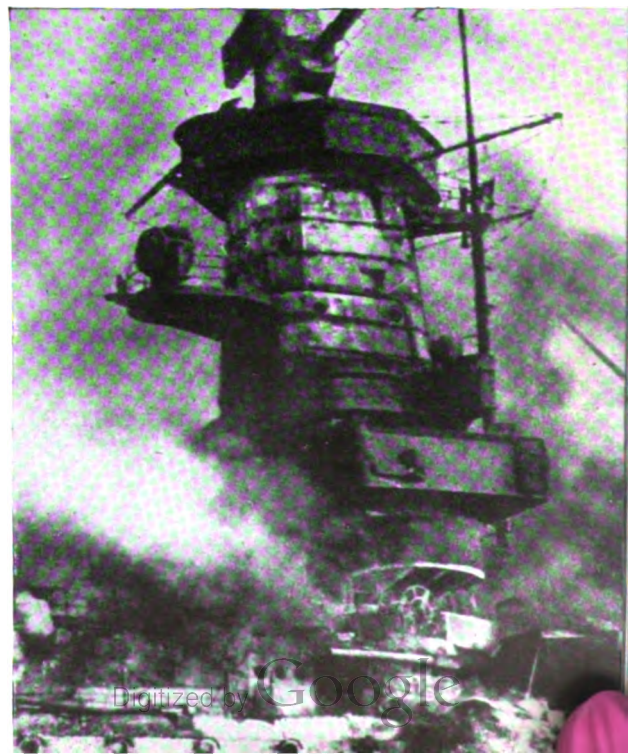
THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL, NOVEMBER 8TH, 1939

IT IS SIGNIFICANT that the first British victory in the European war was a naval victory—the brilliantly fought action, in December 1939, in the South Atlantic, which resulted in the self-destruction of the German pocket-battleship *Admiral Graf Spee*.

For the next 21 months the British Navy was to be the only considerable force operating with continuous effect against the Germans and their satellites. The Royal Air Force fought—and won—an heroic action between August and October 1940, but it was a defensive action only. Incidentally, it was an action which could never have been fought without the petrol,

explosives and other supplies brought across the Atlantic in enormous quantities under the protection of the Navy. Consistently, from the outbreak of hostilities, the British Navy took a decisive and effective offensive—this in addition to all the manifold duties involved in maintaining the communications of a vast and widespread Empire, in making possible the carrying of troops, equipment, stores and the raw materials of war industry to the small, embattled island which was putting

Suicide of a Nazi raider. The "Graf Spee" goes down off Montevideo.





"The British Isles and the Atlantic thus lie completely within the range of Germany's weapons," ran the caption to this propaganda map published by the Nazis in 1941.

up so stubborn a resistance to the threat of Nazi conquest.

In September 1939 the German and the British Navies were, in two very different senses, prepared for war. The Germans had their ships and their men, and they knew exactly what they intended to do with them. This time the blockade and conquest of Britain was to be complete and final. It was to be achieved, first, by gaining control of the western European coastline from the north of Norway to the south of the Bay of Biscay, or even to Gibraltar ; second, by setting up coastal bases from which surface raiders, submarines and aircraft could completely destroy Britain's sea communications and, by a combination of terror and starvation—or, if necessary, by actual seaborne invasion—force Great Britain to surrender.

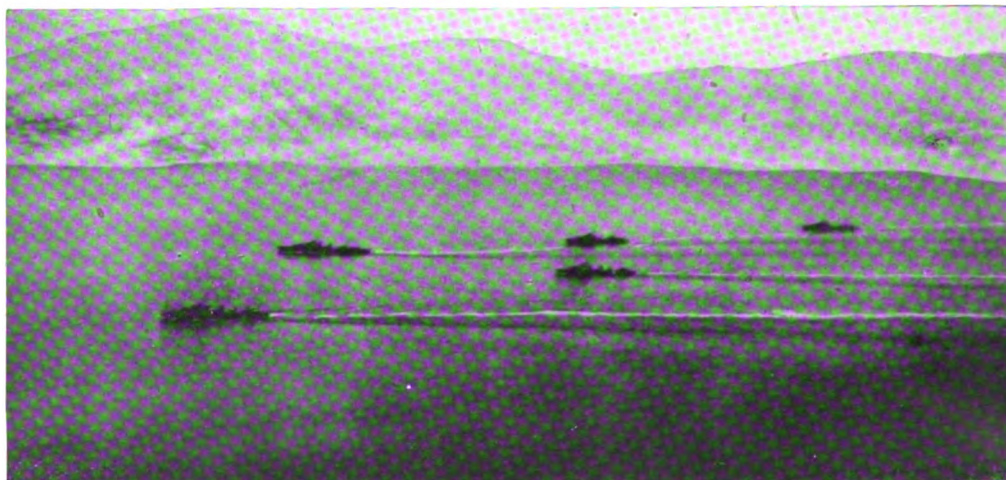
Continental Europe was overrun according to plan, coastal bases were set up, and a merciless Nazi U-boat campaign began.

Hitler held the continental Channel ports, as Napoleon did before him—but the British Navy held the seas. Stores, equipment and the armed forces of the Empire were brought safely through the U-boat-infested waters to Britain. And, thanks to the British Navy, the last free fighting country in Europe stood firm, sheltering the tiny flame of resistance—a flame which was to gather strength until it flared up into a strong, steady blaze—the first of a chain of ever-mounting beacons flung across the free world, kindling smaller but still steady flames in the hearts of the oppressed peoples of Europe.

But the United Nations did not come fully into being until the beginning of 1942. In 1939 and 1940 France was Britain's only ally, and in June 1940 France fell, amid defeat and disaster, a few days after Mussolini, with what turned out to be extremely bad judgment, had thrown in his lot with Hitler.

Britain stood alone against powerful enemies. She had lost most of the equipment of her Regular Army, and the help of the second Navy in Europe. But she still had her own Navy.

Already, the Nazis had been forced by the pressure of British sea power to strike at neutral Norway and Denmark, whose coasts and food supplies they coveted, and the whole weight of the German Navy,



NARVIK, April 1940.

Above: British destroyers steam up Ofot Fjord towards Narvik.

Below: German supply ships and transports lie battered and derelict in Narvik harbour.





operating under the “umbrella” of the Luftwaffe, had been unable to prevent the British Navy from transporting an army across 500 miles of open sea, and landing men, vehicles and aircraft at many points along the Norwegian coast. The land operations in Norway were unsuccessful, coming as they did at a time when the

greater part of the small British Army was facing the Germans in France. But British sea power maintained that small force for several weeks, on a hostile coast, hundreds of miles from home, and ultimately embarked and evacuated it, inflicting heavy casualties on the German Navy in the process. In the two Narvik actions alone, at least nine of Germany’s twenty-four modern destroyers were wiped out, seriously hampering the German surface fleet in its future movements—a fact of supreme value in the difficult days which were to follow.

naval forces, had suddenly become a potential theatre of war.

Here, briefly, is the naval situation at midsummer 1940—a situation entirely favourable to the Axis Powers. In the Atlantic, the British Navy had its hands more than full. It had to guard Great Britain, then the only non-Axis centre of war production in Europe ; the workshop in which were being produced the guns, tanks and aircraft to carry on the fight against aggression. It had to protect the sea routes along which came food and raw materials to feed the workers and machines in Britain. All this had to be done, and, throughout the bitter winter which followed, was done, in the face of desperate attempts by the Nazis, now in control of the whole of the western seaboard of Europe (except the Spanish and Portuguese coasts), to cut Britain’s lifelines. There was more danger for convoys, harder work for escort vessels, there were longer patrols for submarines, more mines to be swept—and laid. In every phase the Battle of the Atlantic acquired a sharper edge. Dark, moonless nights and filthy weather came to be welcomed, for though they brought hardship and intolerable strain, they also made it more difficult for U-boats to track down the convoys.

In the Mediterranean itself, the French

Left : “*The Withdrawal from Dunkirk*,”
by Richard Eurich.

Below : *These, and even smaller craft, played their part in the evacuation from Dunkirk.*



The story of Dunkirk—one of the most intricate tasks which British sea power has ever had to face—has already been briefly told. Even though that great evacuation took place before the United Nations came into being, it must be regarded as one of the actions most vital to their cause. For if British sea power had failed at Dunkirk, Britain would have fallen, and with her the last remaining base for attack on Nazi-occupied Europe.

But the Navy did not fail. And already, with the entry of Italy into the war, it was confronted by fresh tasks and wider areas of operation. The Mediterranean, previously controlled for the safe passage of war supplies by small British and French

fleet had not merely ceased to be a helpful ally. There seemed to be a real and pressing danger that it might, at any moment, become an active enemy. And

then there was Italy. Her fine fleet, with its splendid bases, could operate easily in the Mediterranean, while on land (and the complete strategic situation must be kept in mind if the course of operations is to be properly understood) the Italian forces in Libya had suddenly become an actual instead of merely a potential threat to Egypt, to the Suez Canal, in fact to the most important line of communication of the British Empire.

What circumstances kept the Axis naval command from exploiting more fully a situation so full of promise? The question cannot be answered before the full facts are known, but it is likely that the reason was an over-estimate of the power of aircraft. That is to say, the Axis commanders imagined that they could sterilize the British Navy by using aircraft from shore bases in western Europe and the Mediterranean. They would not risk their battlefleets at this stage, because they had further aggressions in their programme—Africa, Asia, the Americas, Australia—and wished to keep their fleets intact for these long-distance adventures. Perhaps,

*The Mediterranean as
Germany saw it in 1942.*

*En route for Malta with a British
convoy in 1943.*

1, 3, 4. *The naval escort in action.*

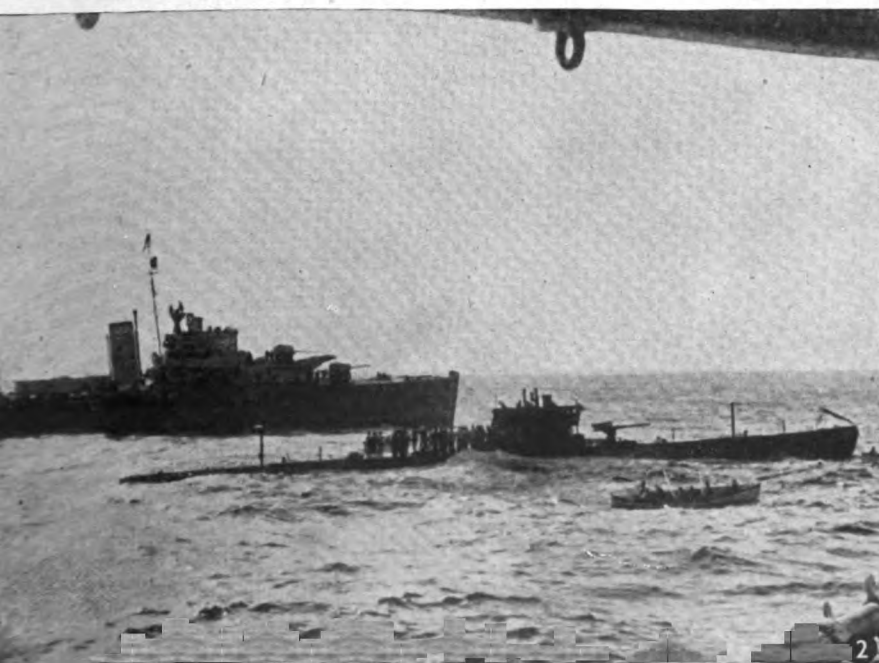
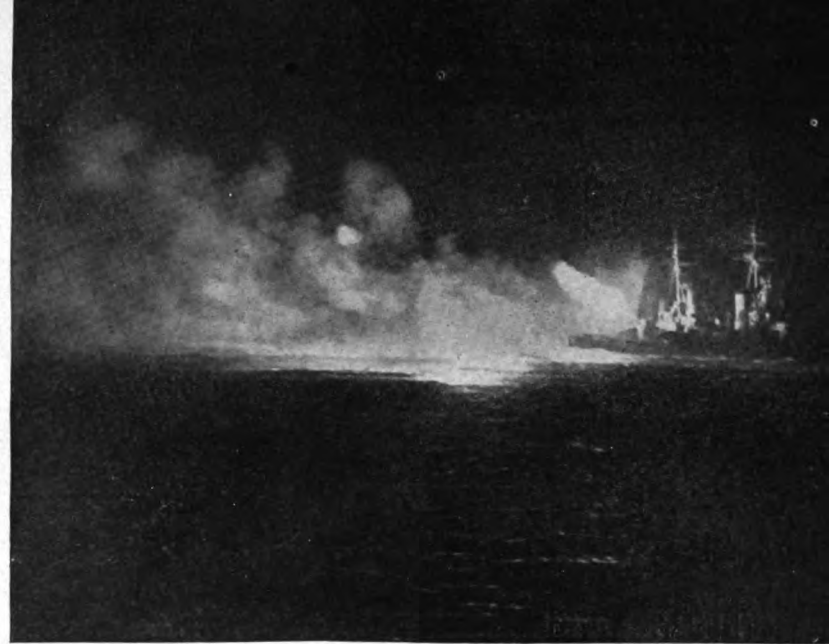
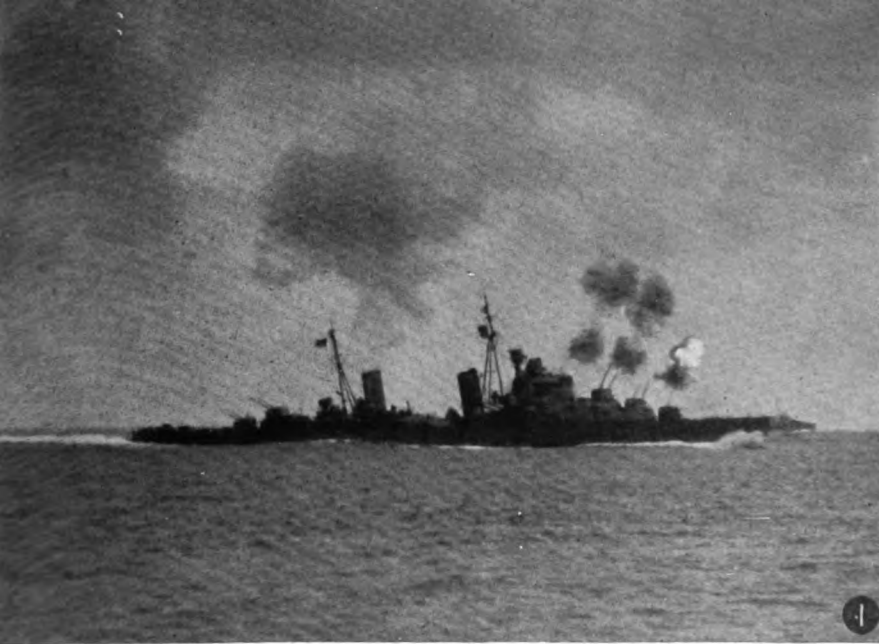
2. *An Italian submarine surrenders.*

too, they feared that, tied as Britain was, her fleet was still just a little too powerful to make its defeat a certainty, and so they delayed from month to month, always hoping that negotiations with Vichy would give them control of the French fleet and swing the balance of naval strength indisputably to the Axis side.

Whatever hidden reasons and motives there may have been, the simple fact remains that the Axis failed to strike the iron while it was hot, and Britain, more experienced, having learnt through centuries that naval warfare means the constant taking of risks, was able not only to regroup her fleets to meet the new situation, but was also able, thanks to sea power, to move new armies and their equipment to Egypt—vital decisions taken in the face of imminent danger; decisions which had a far-reaching effect upon the course of the war.

Throughout August, September and October, while Britain's airmen were









tirelessly clearing her skies of German aircraft, while the first British bombs were falling on a supposedly bomb-proof Berlin, units of the British fleet were scouring the Mediterranean, through which important convoys were passing. Several lurking Italian submarines were sent to the bottom, but Mussolini's surface ships, as though tacitly accepting British mastery of the Mediterranean, went to great lengths to avoid contact with British warships, altering course when they were sighted, and fleeing for home, often under cover of heavy smoke-screens. This happened consistently throughout the first three months of Italy's war with Britain, in spite of the fact that British naval forces were usually outnumbered and were often hampered by the convoys which it was their primary duty to protect.

During these months, Italy relied chiefly upon land-based long-range bombers to attack British ships. These attacks failed, almost without exception, in the face of

spirited opposition from the few British naval and R.A.F. fighters already in the Mediterranean. In addition, flights of torpedo-carrying "Swordfish" aircraft made constant sorties against Italian warships whenever they were sighted. The arrival of H.M.S. *Illustrious*—one of the British Navy's most up-to-date aircraft carriers, complete with torpedo-bombers and "Fulmar" fighters—gave increased protection to the fleet against enemy aircraft, and by the end of October 1940, the *Illustrious's* fighters were able to prevent enemy bombers from penetrating the fringes of the fleet.

Italy's policy—unsuccessful throughout—of using land-based aircraft against the British fleet showed clearly that air strength was no substitute for sea power; Britain's use of aircraft in conjunction with naval forces demonstrated the great effectiveness of sea power and air power used in conjunction. This effectiveness was to be proved beyond all possible doubt at Taranto.

Meanwhile, as the long and loudly heralded Italian invasion of Egypt began, the British Navy showed further versatility by combining effectively with land forces. Already the town and harbour of Tobruk had been so bombarded from the sea that the Italians had abandoned it as a base.

Extreme left: *A Malta convoy under heavy air attack.*

Above: *Steaming into Valletta harbour.*

Below: *Unloading at night under arc lamps.*



After the bombardment, August 1940. A British cruiser moves out from an Axis-held port on the Libyan coast.

In the middle of August 1940, by which time large Italian forces were massed along the Libyan coast, Bardia, already attacked several times from the sea, came in for several heavy poundings, including one delivered from inside the harbour itself by a shallow-draught British gunboat.

As the Italian army advanced towards

Egypt, light British naval forces advanced abreast of them, moving rapidly—and destructively—up and down their lines of communication in the face of bombs, torpedoes, mines and every other deterrent the Italians could think of. Three months later, these same ships were to bombard the same dust-veiled columns as—moving rather faster this time—they retreated

before the Army of the Nile, to be finally bombed and blasted from the land, from the sea, and from the air, into defeat and submission at Bardia.

But Bardia was a lesson still in store for the Italians. At the end of October, eager to plunder one of the few small countries as yet untouched by Germany, they declared war on Greece.

The war in Greece gave Britain a new and brave ally in the Mediterranean ; it also presented her with new problems of supply and transport. Greece was not a strong naval power, so that many responsibilities were added to the already heavy ones of the British naval forces in the Mediterranean. Vast convoys of troops and supplies had to be escorted, now, not only to the Middle East, but to Greece, while the Greek coasts and islands required constant vigilance and strong protection. Away to the west, the fortress of Malta needed defensive patrols and regular supplies. And between Italy and the two Mediterranean battle-fronts lay supply routes whose disruption constituted at the same time the Navy's favourite form of activity and its most useful contribution to the war on land.

It was now apparent that the Italian navy must be dealt with immediately. This

was no time for waiting until it came out to fight, for the circumstances under which it might well choose an inconvenient time to do so were multiplying rapidly. If necessary, it must be sought out and disabled where it lay in supposed safety. The obvious "seeking out" weapon was naval aircraft. And the moment had come for the Air Arm to strike.

The Air Arm had spent a long time preparing for that moment. Fleet Air Arm pilots are sailors first and foremost, and their work is as essential to the modern British Fleet as was that of the frigates of Nelson's day; had Nelson been able to catapult an aircraft from the *Victory*, there would have been no need for him to scour the Mediterranean for the French fleet, or to follow Villeneuve across the Atlantic to the West Indies and back again.

Naval aircraft have not altered the principles of sea warfare, but they have vastly enlarged its scope; not only have they extended the range of the fleet by about 400 miles, but they are also capable

Units of the Italian Fleet lie crippled in Taranto harbour.



of acting as a striking force in land-locked areas closed to the larger units of the fleet. Taranto harbour, where the Italian fleet lay in supposed safety, was just such an area, and on the evening of November 11th, 1940, torpedo-aircraft of the carriers *Eagle* and *Illustrious* flew low into the harbour, sinking at least one battleship and heavily damaging two others and two of the Italians' fine cruisers.

Three months later, on February 9th, 1941, a British squadron under Vice-Admiral Somerville made its way, unseen, to the Italians' northern base at Genoa, and heavily bombarded its naval installations there, while at the same time carrier-borne aircraft raided the airfields at Pisa, eighty miles along the coast. Already, on January 10th, an east-bound British convoy had been heavily-attacked from the air in the Sicilian narrows. The convoy escaped, but the cruiser *Southampton* was heavily attacked and had to be abandoned. The aircraft-carrier *Illustrious* was also heavily hit, but managed to struggle into Malta, from which base, after five days' repairing under constant air attack, she was able to set out and reach Alexandria under her own steam. Even in narrow waters, with everything in its favour, air power failed to establish the mastery over sea power.

Throughout the winter of 1940-41 the

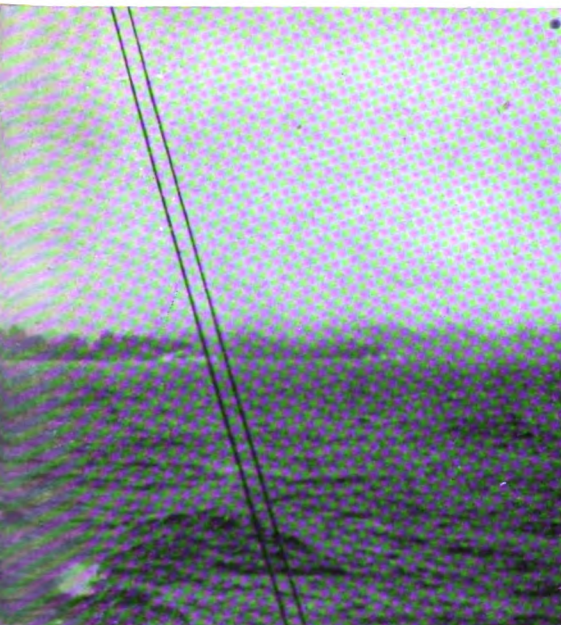
British forces, having compelled the Italians to turn abruptly in their tracks, advanced triumphantly along the Libyan coast. And in Greece, to which the British Navy was maintaining a strong supply-line through the submarine-infested waters of the Ægean, the Italians were receiving a well-deserved trouncing at the hands of a valiant and determined adversary. By the early spring it was plain to Hitler that if Italy were not rapidly bolstered up she would go utterly to pieces. German mechanized troops were hastily concentrated in Italian ports, suggesting a German thrust into Libya through Tripoli; armoured divisions were massed in Bulgaria, boding an assault of overwhelming strength on Greece.

Britain decided to aid Greece with "all the help in our power"—a decision which meant calling to a halt the victorious Libyan offensive, and the withdrawal of a large portion of the Army of the Nile. It was virtually a surrender of Libya—albeit only a temporary one—to enable Britain to keep her promise to Greece.

As the commencement of hostilities by Germany became more imminent, the operation of transporting an army into Greece developed into a race against time—a race over a singularly dangerous course, since the passage from Egypt to



the Piraeus lay past the chain of enemy bases in the Dodecanese, so that convoys were constantly exposed to the threat of encounters with enemy surface raiders. In spite of these hazards, not a man, gun or vehicle was lost in transit. One of the threatened encounters—greatly to the regret of the Italians—did actually



The Battle of Matapan; British destroyers divert strong Italian forces towards the main British Fleet.

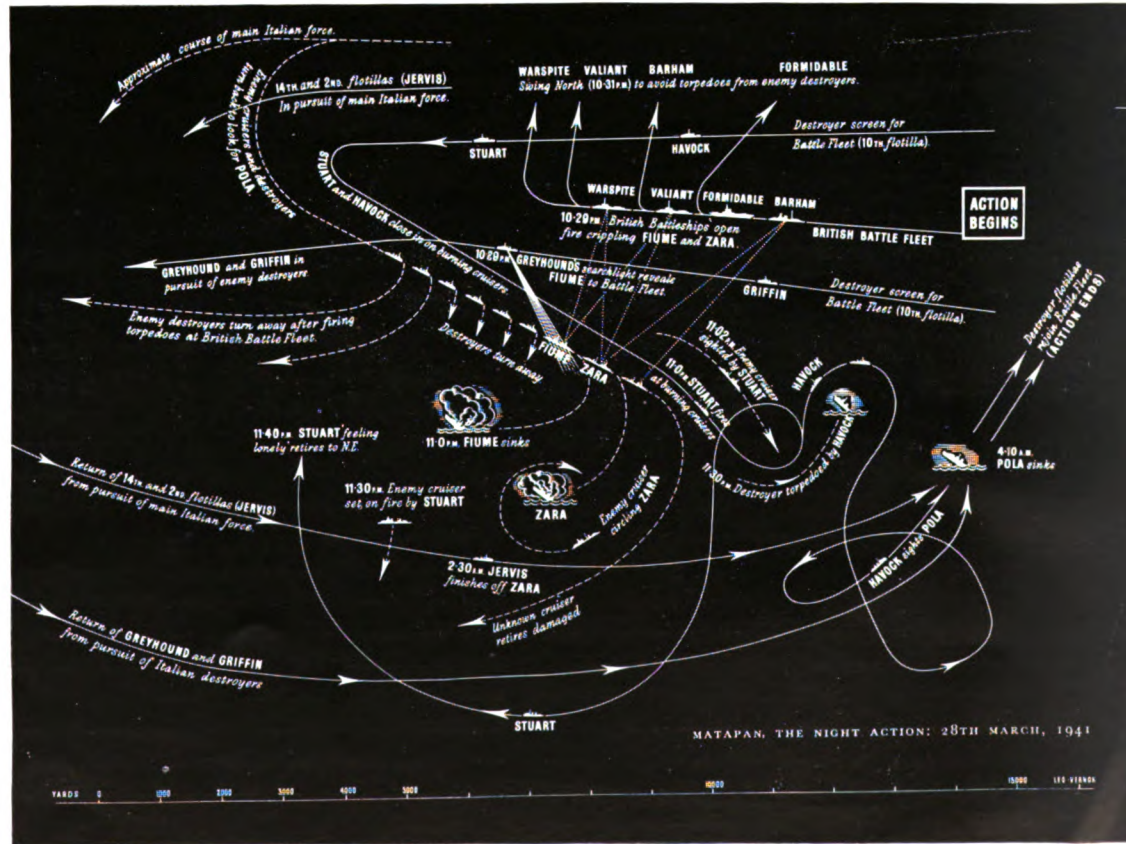
Right: A minute-by-minute plan of the action.

materialize, and became known as the Battle of Matapan.

On March 28th, 1941, patrolling aircraft reported the Italian Fleet in strength, south-west of Crete. The Italian admiral tried to retire west and north, but was so

delayed by torpedo attacks that the British Fleet was able to catch up with the Italian ships after dark that same night, and at once engaged them. The battleship *Vittorio Veneto* was crippled, and the

Italians lost three large cruisers and two destroyers before they succeeded in withdrawing the rest of their fleet to its harbours. The British Fleet suffered no losses whatever.



During April and May 1941, British land and air forces fought a losing battle among the mountain passes of Greece and the stony hills of Crete. By May 20th, evacuation of Crete was unavoidable, and, under heavy air attack which entailed considerable naval losses, an important part of the British forces, including the Australians, who had fought so valiantly, was taken to safety.

Axis land gains and British naval losses had by this time made the British position in the Mediterranean much more precarious, but the Suez Canal was still protected, and at the southern end of the Red Sea the position was considerably better. The British had reoccupied Somaliland and captured Assab and Massawa in Eritrea, thus removing all threats to the long sea routes leading to the Middle East war zone across the Indian Ocean or round the Cape of Good Hope.

While these routes from Great Britain or America were far longer than the direct Mediterranean passage, entailing the use of far more ships in the course of a year's supply work, the fact remained that the Axis had not succeeded by naval or aerial means in cutting off the British armies in Egypt. When it seemed likely that the

Germans would attempt a thrust by land through Syria and Palestine, British forces were sent into Syria and blocked their line of advance.

Midsummer 1941 presented a curious situation to the impartial observer. The Axis were everywhere successful yet nowhere victorious. They had pushed their panzers to the coasts of France in the west and the shores of Greece in the south-east. In Africa they faced the British along the Egyptian frontier. They had badly disorganized the British Empire's main trade route through the Mediterranean.

But, in the face of tremendous odds, the British Navy had managed to maintain its position in that and all other seas. Egypt—the key to the Empire's trade routes, and, via Iraq and Persia, to the Caucasian oilfields—still stood firm, thanks to the Navy. Just how valuable that grip on the Middle East was to prove to the United Nations was as yet unrevealed. But even so, the Nazis could see that the coasts of Europe and the Egyptian frontier were the farthest they were likely to advance west and south. Hitler knew that his forces *must* advance—or perish. On June 22nd, 1941, he marched into Russia.

With the attack on the U.S.S.R., the

war passed into its second phase. Great Britain no longer fought alone, and although America had not yet entered the war, she was already sending to Britain vastly increased supplies under the Lend-Lease arrangement, which came into force in March 1941. Slowly but surely, resistance to the Axis was swinging over from the negative to the positive scale.

Since, in all that dark time of Britain's isolation, the brightest periods were provided by victorious naval actions, it is fitting that its close should be marked, like its beginning, by yet another naval victory; the bitter, running battle over 2,000 miles of ocean in which the huge German battleship *Bismarck* was located, shadowed, brought to action and finally sunk; an action which, though valuable as a direct contribution to the struggle against Hitler, was indirectly even more valuable in that it warmed the hearts and raised to an even higher level the fighting spirit of the British people.

The end of the "Bismarck."



JUNE 1941—OCTOBER 1942— THE BASTIONS STAND

*“From being all alone, the sole champion left in arms against
Nazi tyranny, we are now among the leaders of a majestic
company of states and nations.”*

THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL, SEPTEMBER 8TH, 1942

IN THE YEAR which followed the establishment of the Germans in Norway, there had been comparative quiet in the waters of the Far North, although British submarines and light forces harried enemy coastwise shipping, and several successful “Commando” raids were made in co-operation with the Army, notably on the Lofoten Islands. But after June 1941, and Germany’s attack on Russia, the cold silence of those northern waters was abruptly shattered. Allied convoys taking vital cargoes—tanks, aircraft, medical

supplies and equipment of all kinds—to the Red Army had to fight their way, almost yard by yard, along the enemy-occupied coasts of the Arctic Ocean. Some bitter, hard-fought actions resulted from ceaseless German attacks by aircraft, submarine and—occasionally—surface craft. But in spite of these attacks, and in spite of the foul weather, the icebergs and the black fog with which convoys had to contend, the British Navy established a firm supply line to Russia—a route which became the avenue for supplies, not only from Britain,

but from the United States, whose vast resources were, by this time, being rapidly turned over to war production.

But the British Navy did far more than this for Russia—and, through Russia, for the cause of the United Nations—during the first two and a half years of her war against Germany. Once again, the story of what the Navy did is inseparable from the story of Britain’s achievements as the focal point of resistance to the Axis, for little of what Britain did in the European

war would have been possible without the Navy.

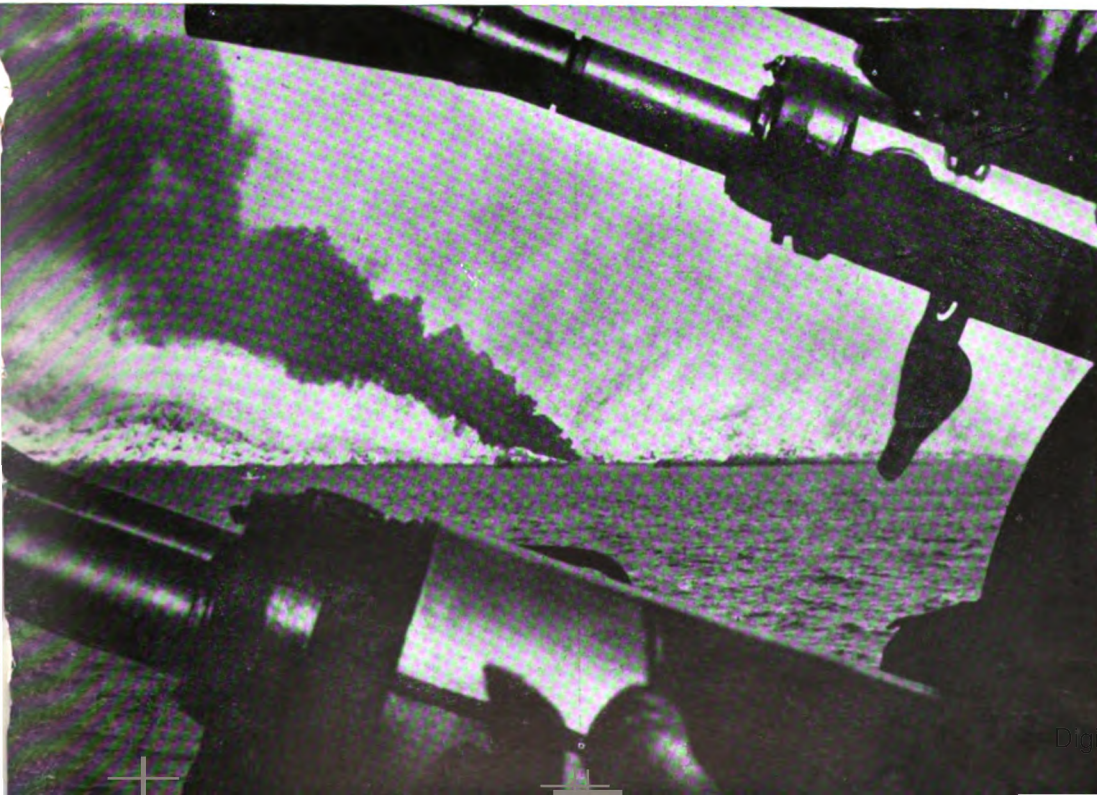
The constant threat of seaborne attack at any one of a great many points on the long sea coast of German-occupied Europe held down in western Europe large concentrations of troops which, as the Russian war went on, were sorely needed on the eastern front. By steady, relentless bomb-

ing of carefully selected industrial targets in Germany, Britain used her growing air strength to impair the striking-power of Germany—air strength built up from petrol, raw materials and aircraft convoyed across the Atlantic by the British Navy. The scale of the raids which were made on German war-production during the last two years of the European war tends to minimize those made during 1941 and



Above : *Oil storage tanks ablaze after the raid on Spitsbergen.*

Left : *Off Lofoten, March 1941.*



1942. It should not be forgotten that, as early as May 1942, a thousand British bombers, escorted by fighter aircraft, went out on one single raid—a raid which was merely part of a closely woven pattern of destruction from the air of German war industry.

Throughout the critical days which followed Dunkirk, the Navy had kept Britain's fighter aircraft flying and fighting when the survival of everything which Britain represented depended upon their





The Murmansk supply route. This convoy was attacked by enemy torpedo planes and U-boats for four days without pause.

Left: Anti-aircraft fire from a British warship.

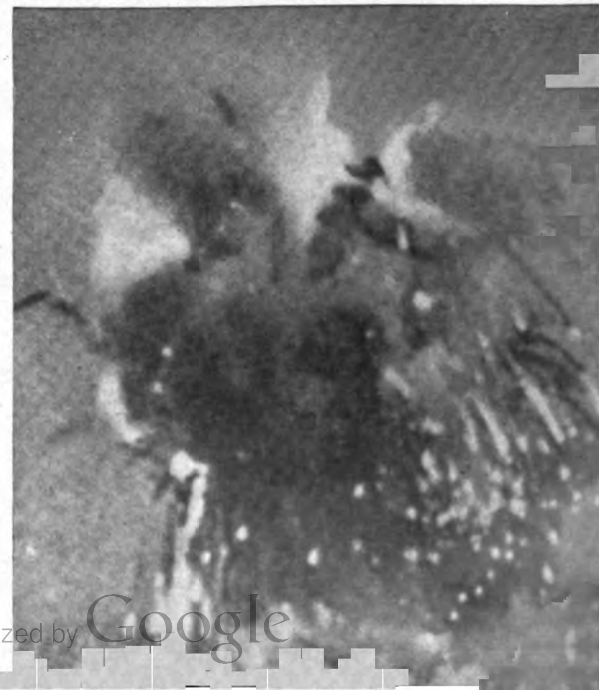
ability to fly and fight without respite. Now it was the turn of the bombers. By the third quarter of 1941 the R.A.F.'s offensive on Germany was vastly greater, ton for ton, than was that of the Luftwaffe on Britain—8,800 tons of bombs in three months, as against 1,600 tons. The story of the growth of that great offensive has been told elsewhere. Its importance to the cause of the United Nations is incalculable. But it should never be forgotten that

Above: A near miss from a heavy bomb.

Right: An ammunition ship is hit; the explosion destroyed three enemy aircraft.

without the Navy the use of the British Isles as a base for air attack upon Germany would never have been possible. Britain has well been called "an unsinkable aircraft carrier."

Perhaps the most direct aid which Britain gave to Russia during the months before and immediately after America's entry into the war was her defeat of Rommel's attempts to reach the Caucasian



oilfields via Egypt and Iraq, and to disrupt the alternative supply route to Russia via the Red Sea and Persia.

In the Mediterranean, as elsewhere, the invasion of Russia marked a turning-point in the war. German troops and supplies were being rapidly poured into Libya, by way of Tripoli, giving the Navy plenty of work to do in attacking transports and their escorting warships. And it was, at this stage, more vital than ever for Britain to keep the island of Malta in active operation as a base for ships and aircraft. So, during autumn and winter 1941-42, though its fate sometimes seemed

to hang by a thread and losses in supply convoys became a very serious matter, the Axis never quite succeeded in their efforts to annihilate that tiny, stout-hearted island.

Malta—a thousand miles east from Gibraltar, a thousand miles west from Alexandria, but only twenty minutes' flying time from Axis airfields in Sicily—is one of the most densely populated areas in Europe. Its agricultural resources are enough to feed only one-third of its

inhabitants. The rest—arms, equipment, fuel, petrol, food—could only reach Malta from overseas. Convoys from Britain usually had to circumnavigate Africa, fighting the Battle of the Atlantic on the way, as the prelude to the Battle of Malta.

There was something right and logical, as well as something heroic, about the Navy's maintenance of Malta. A part of the British Empire—at its own request—since 1814, Malta has long been the

THE FLEET AIR ARM

Below, left : *"Hurri-bombers" based on Malta.*

Below, right : *Loading up torpedo-carrying aircraft.*

Right : *Shock troops leave a British ship for Madagascar.*





Mediterranean headquarters of the Navy. For over a century the Maltese have helped to man the Fleet, and that small, crowded area of Mediterranean rock holds pride of place in the affections of the British sailor, side by side with Portsmouth, Plymouth, and all the other naval ports where every family has its connections with the Fleet, and the summit of juvenile ambition is a genuine nautical roll.

Now, as Axis bombers roared over Malta, and dockyard workers manned the anti-aircraft guns, the British Navy handled the island's sea defences and brought in her supplies. Throughout 1942, convoys fought their way doggedly to Malta. On March 22nd—to take one of many examples—a British convoy with an escort only of destroyers and light cruisers beat off attacks, first by four Italian cruisers, then by a *Littorio* class battleship, two eight-inch gun cruisers, four light cruisers and several destroyers. Such actions were the highlights in a continual struggle between cruiser and destroyer, between merchant ship and aircraft, which was to go on until Mussolini was mastered and the North African coast, Sicily and Pantelleria were in the hands of the Allies.

Throughout the year, the Fleet Air Arm gave cover to every important convoy to Malta. In addition, British aircraft carriers

transported 744 fighters, and the United States carrier *Wasp*, which helped on two occasions with this vital work, brought 111 aircraft to Malta. Without these aircraft the defence of the island would have been impossible. Between August and November 1942, Malta was virtually in a state of siege, but, although it was at one time necessary to use submarines for the purpose, the Navy managed to get supplies through.

Malta—whose importance as a forward base in the Mediterranean can be judged by the enemy's sustained and desperate efforts to cut her supply lines—came gallantly through her time of trial, to become the offensive base for devastating attacks against the Axis supply lines.

With the attack on Pearl Harbour (December 7th, 1941), the United States entered the war, and the United Nations came into being. Britain had acquired a new and enormously powerful ally—and another enemy.

The immediate effect of the developments in the Pacific was disastrous. The Japanese had the advantage of surprise on their side and, carried rapidly forward by their initial impetus, they had soon driven far into Burma, while their submarines began to operate far to the south and west in the Indian Ocean. The long sea route up

the east coast of Africa, which for the past year had been used as an alternative to the hazardous Mediterranean route, faced a new menace. Always a costly route—costly not in sinkings, but in the length of time which each ship must spend in completing one voyage—it now seemed that it might exact ships and men's lives, as well as time. There was grave danger that a swift move like those in the Pacific might result in the Japanese capturing Madagascar and establishing bases there. Though this would not have closed the Cape route to the East, it would certainly have increased the losses of ships and cargoes using that route. Britain determined that it should not happen, and the whole world was surprised one morning—it was May 5th, 1942—to hear that a British army, fully equipped, and supported by heavy units of the Navy, had landed on Madagascar. Unseen, and with its destination unsuspected, this force had left England several weeks before and had made its 7,000-mile voyage in safety.

Thanks to British sea power, the United Nations kept intact the route which they needed for working out their combined long-term strategy—a strategy based on communications, and dependent entirely upon freedom to move over the waters of the whole world, striking the enemy wherever he proved most vulnerable.

THE TIDE FLOWS BACK—

OCTOBER 1942—MAY 1944

*“Those who sowed the wind
are reaping the whirlwind.”*

THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL, JUNE 1943

ALL ANGLO-AMERICAN war strategy depended upon the Navy. Because of this, the Navy's work during the third phase of the war was, though on the whole less hazardous, harder and more concentrated than ever before. Many thousands of United States soldiers and airmen, huge quantities of equipment, ammunition and aircraft, were brought safely over the Atlantic. Britain became a vast fortress containing the greatest concentrations of troops ever known in the history of war; the principal base for onslaught upon

German-occupied Europe. None the less, great hazards there still were.

Autumn 1942 was a critical period in the affairs of the United Nations. The German Army had reached Stalingrad and the Caucasus. In North Africa, things had been going badly for Britain. To recapitulate briefly: the diversion of so large a part of General Wavell's army to Greece had left the British positions very thinly held. Reinforcements were on the way, but the British supply lines were 12,000

miles long. The Germans (who had come to the rescue of the Italians) seized their opportunity, and more divisions were sent to North Africa. The Eighth Army was swept back to the Egyptian frontier. But the port of Tobruk remained in British hands. And Tobruk, supplied and maintained by the Navy, continued for eight months to be a thorn in the side of the Axis forces in Africa, making a general attack on Egypt and the Canal too hazardous to be attempted.

Some months of bitter fighting followed,



during which the British forces again drove westwards as far as El Agheila. But in June 1942, the Eighth Army had to retreat once more—back to El Alamein, where they made their stand, barring the way to Alexandria and Suez. This time Tobruk was captured by the Axis forces. Such was the situation in October 1942.

The war in Africa seemed at a standstill—with a heavy bias in favour of the Axis. But over the long, perilous supply lines from Britain, the Navy was bringing reinforcements—more men, more guns, more aircraft, more of the newest, heaviest tanks. Already, as raw materials or as finished products, nearly all these vital supplies had been brought across the Atlantic, while some of them had come direct from the United States, securely guarded by naval escort vessels.

This time Britain was determined that the attack should not fail. Throughout the darkest days—days when there was not as much as one fully equipped division in Britain to defend her against what seemed

like imminent invasion—the sea-lanes had been kept clear, and reinforcements which could not reasonably be spared *were* spared, and sent to the vital Middle East front. That front had been held. And now, after more than two years of holding on, of triumphs and disappointments, Britain prepared to hit back in real earnest.

At 9.30 p.m. on October 23rd, 1942, there was a sudden, breathless hush behind the British lines, and then—from heavy guns, closely spaced along a six-mile sector—the mightiest roar ever to echo across the battle-scarred Western Desert.

The British Eighth Army, now led by General Montgomery, and prodigiously reinforced, under the protection of British sea power, from camps and factories 12,000 miles away, moved to the attack. It advanced, finally and irresistibly, across the dusty tracks which bore the half-obliterated footprints of so many armies. As it advanced it was supported by the closest co-operation from the Navy—not in the least disorganized by another great task for which it was even then still preparing. In the first twelve days of the advance, the Navy and R.A.F. together sank 50,000 tons of Axis shipping carrying supplies to North Africa. As the Eighth Army advanced, the Navy maintained the

flow of supplies by sea, and rapidly got each newly captured port into working order. After a stiff but hopeless resistance, Rommel prepared to withdraw to the safety of his bases in Tripoli far to the west. But even farther west than he could go was something the existence of which he had no idea. Rising and dipping amid the Atlantic rollers, 500 transports and 350 naval escorts—the greatest convoy yet known in the history of the world—were moving steadily towards the Strait of Gibraltar. They slipped between the headlands unseen, and, in the dawn, British and American armies were pouring on to the Algerian shores. Once again, sea power, expertly used, had shown its ability to dictate the strategy of armies tied to the land.

Every type of ship sailed in the North Africa convoy—large troopships carrying landing parties, together with their assault craft ; fast cargo ships to carry tanks and transport ; colliers and other merchant vessels ; tankers and repair ships to carry out the necessary work of supply and maintenance. And yet more ships to carry supporting troops and additional equipment. Many factors had to be taken into consideration when plotting the sailing times of the different ships from widely scattered ports. Allowances had to be

A 12,000-mile supply route ; guns, tanks, aircraft and fuel for the Eighth Army.





The huge convoy which took the Allied Armies to North Africa in November 1942.

made for differences in speed, weather conditions and other things likely to affect the time of arrival. Each type of equipment, each landing force, had to arrive where it was needed, when it was needed—no sooner and no later. And cargoes had to be so arranged that no one ship, if sunk, would leave the expedition short of essential equipment.

All these arrangements were entirely successful. Everything possible had been foreseen, and the invasion of North Africa ran perfectly to schedule. Nothing was forgotten, from water supplies to road-building equipment. Only ten British and five U.S. ships were lost in the whole operation. And the vital ports of French North Africa were occupied with little difficulty.

By the end of November 1942, the Mediterranean seaway had been virtually cleared, lifting the siege of Malta and shortening by thousands of miles the supply lines of the Allied armies in North

Africa. The victory won by those armies, and the entire clearance of the Axis from the North African shores, gave the Allies almost complete control of the Mediterranean. And North Africa, in conjunction with Malta, was the key to Sicily, to southern Italy and to Italy's final liquidation. The planning and execution of the last great chapter of the Mediterranean war—a chapter which, after more than three years, gave the United Nations a foothold upon the mainland of Europe—was again the work of the British Navy and its allied fleets; 3,266 ships of all kinds and sizes were engaged in the Anglo-American attack on Sicily—the greatest amphibious operation of the war at that date. In the initial assault alone, 160,000 men, 14,000 vehicles, 600 tanks and 1,800 guns were transported. All of these had already been convoyed to their bases in North Africa and Malta; many of them had first been brought across the Atlantic. Throughout the Sicilian campaign and the attack on the Italian mainland itself, the Navy closely supported the Allied armies, bringing up reinforcements and vital supplies, and carrying out heavy bombardments of enemy shore defences—a task for which their long range makes naval guns especially suitable. The vital part played by naval gunnery in the Battle of Salerno is only one example of effective naval

co-operation with land forces. During the Sicilian campaign, British warships subjected the island to more than fifty organized bombardments, firing more than 20,000 extremely effective rounds against selected enemy targets.

The victory of the United Nations over Italy, of the British Fleet over the Italian, was completed by the unconditional

surrender of Italy, announced on September 8th, 1943. Two days later, units of the Italian Fleet steamed into Valletta harbour—perhaps the most dramatic moment of the Allied victory in the Mediterranean. And by November, five Italian battleships, eight light cruisers, thirty-one destroyers and torpedo-boats, forty submarines and scores of smaller craft were under Allied control.

Out of the mouths of the Italians themselves came words of wisdom when, as far back as November 1942, they stated in a broadcast from Rome: "A Mediterranean opened once more to British traffic would be the first stride towards a larger field of action for the British Fleet—and the war depends on the Fleet."

Truer words have rarely been spoken,



for everything the United Nations have done in the European war has depended vitally upon the Navy.

Throughout the long months, when Britain was the only active centre of resistance to the Nazis, and during the period when the United Nations were pooling their resources and taking the measure of the task in hand, the Navy

formed the most essential part of their defensive strategy, and then the United Nations took the offensive. In the air alone, the heavy attacks which British bombers were making in 1941 became by 1943 a crushing, non-stop offensive, delivered by night and by day, by the Royal Air Force and by huge forces of United States bombers based in Britain and the Mediterranean. Each one of these attacks repre-

sented much hard work on the part of the Navy ; many days of steaming in convoy, many painstaking hours—curiously blended of utter monotony and extreme danger—of mine-sweeping; many U-boats fought and destroyed in the long, bitter Battle of the Atlantic. Not until May 1943, did the

North Africa, occupied by the Allies, became a spring-board for the invasion of Sicily and Italy. And the British Navy became more and more familiar with the technique of seaborne invasion.



killing of U-boats substantially outnumber the output of U-boats from the Nazi dockyards.

The period with which this account deals ended, as it began, with a spectacular naval victory.

The *Graf Spee* action came “like a flash of light and colour” in the first dark winter of war. A few months later Britain was to stand alone, almost unarmed, facing the hostile coast-line of German-occupied Europe, and dependent for her very life upon her Navy.

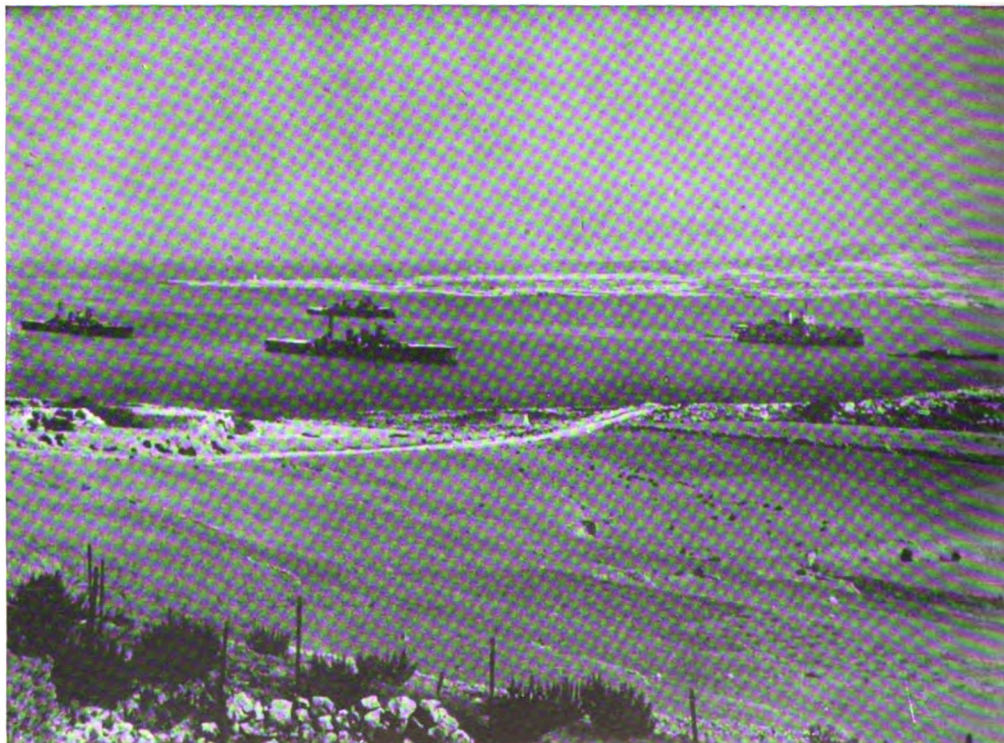
The *Scharnhorst*—sunk by heavy units of the British Fleet while making desperate attempts to intercept a supply convoy bound for Russia—shared the headlines with news of the steady destruction from the air of German war-making capacity, with new military appointments to “Invasion Commands” and with details of the conference at Tehran attended by Mr. Churchill, Marshal Stalin and President Roosevelt.

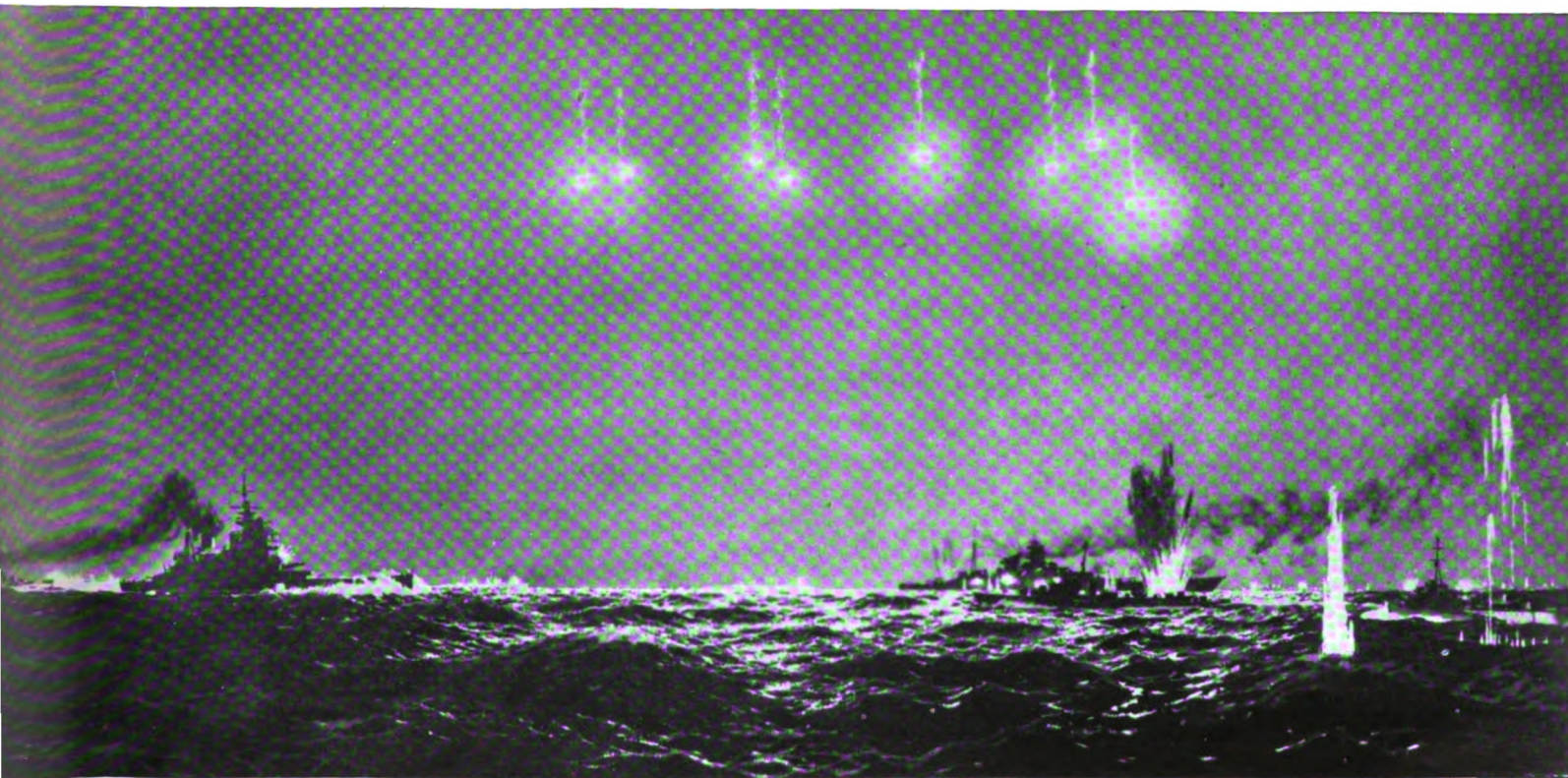
Disaster, isolation and possible defeat lay behind in the darkness. And somewhere ahead—undefined as yet, in place and time—lay certain victory. During those last months of 1943, enormous new

reinforcements of American and Empire troops were brought into Britain in huge convoys. And throughout the spring of 1944, as the air forces of the United Nations pounded the heart of German war industry, as the Russian armies advanced against a rapidly weakening foe,

overwhelming invasion forces massed in the British Isles. On June 6th, 1944, British and American troops landed on the beaches of Normandy, and the war in Europe moved into its final phase ; a phase

Units of the Italian Fleet sail into Malta.





*Twilight on the German Navy ; the "Scharnhorst"
goes down in the Arctic Ocean.*

Painting by Charles Pears.

in which the Navy undertook some of its most exacting tasks in the whole war.

As these words are written, Japan has yet to be finally liquidated. The Far Eastern war—which will be a hard war, and, above

all, a naval war—will inscribe yet another chapter in the story of the British Navy. But one thing is already certain. Had it not been for the British Navy, the United Nations would not to-day stand where they do. From the military and strategic

standpoint, it is unlikely that they would ever have come into existence.

JUNE 1944—THE COMING OF LIBERATION

*“We see before us . . .
the sure presage of our future victory.”*

BRITISH DOMINION PREMIERS, MAY 17TH, 1944

OF THE FINAL PHASE of the war in Europe, and the participation of the British Navy in it, it is not our intention to speak here at any length. An estimate of the contribution of the Navy to the invasion of the Continent and the final victory over Germany would be premature if it were made before the events of 1944 and 1945 had been allowed to recede into historical perspective. But certain primary facts are already clear—the incessant passage of the huge armada of between 4,000 and 5,000 vessels; the rapid establishment of ferry-boat conditions for supply and reinforcement; the devastating effects of naval

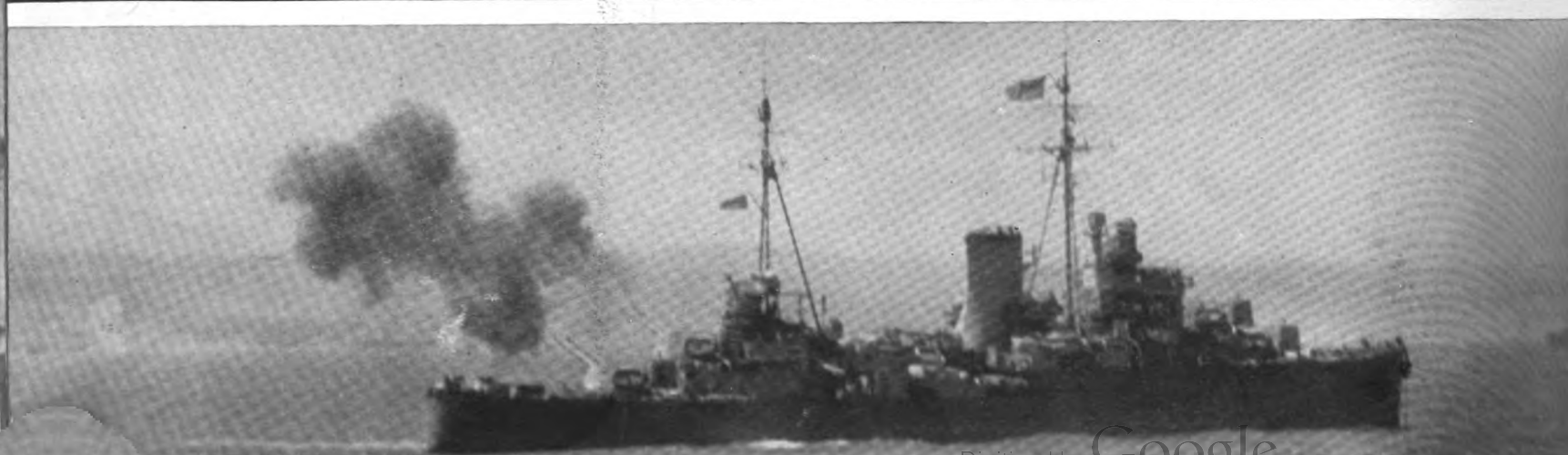
gunfire on the Atlantic Wall and of the curtain of fire extending fifteen miles inland; and the relative immunity of the gigantic fleets from attack. Throughout the invasion operations the enemy made no serious attempt to challenge Allied superiority at sea. That superiority—and indeed the enemy's reluctance to contest it—was largely the result of the experience of five years' unremitting war at sea.

It is already safe to say that the part

*The English Channel on the
morning of June 6th, 1944.*







played by the British Navy in the invasion of Nazi-held Western Europe will rank among the greatest achievements in naval warfare.

The time will no doubt come when the story will be told in full. Meanwhile, we select one of the many eye-witness reports for its power to indicate some aspects of the Navy's work during the invasion :

“The minutes on the beaches were filled with the thunder of bombs and the tumultuous crashing of the guns. But in a measure the journey home has made

a deeper impression on my mind even than the hard moments of the landing.

“Our route lay not straight out to sea but along the coast. And along that coast lay the landings of the force.

“It was the sight of these that brought home to me for the first time how stupendous this thrust against Hitler was. Never have I seen in all my experience of amphibious operations so many ships, so much force.

“There were battleships, cruisers, a host of destroyers. Big personnel ships lined boldly, impudently at anchor seven or eight miles from the shore. Between these anchorages, which were the rallying points of all the subordinate elements of the attack, ran a sort of ferry service.

“Near the beach the weather had begun to clear. Now from a dawn of outrageous cloud and bitter wind it had turned to sun, and we could see the coast not as a thin line in the haze but as hills and fields, houses and valleys backing the line of the beaches. And we could see the ships along the shore—along the beaches.

“The work of ferrying in the second flight was proceeding swiftly, dramatically, as we steamed along.

“About two o'clock we turned into the swept channel that led to England. By that time there must have been a hundred of us L.S.I.s of one type and another and now coming up astern of us, faster than ourselves, the personnel ships began.

Left : *Nearing the French coast.*

Below, left : *The Navy bombards the Atlantic Wall ; H.M. Cruiser “Orion” in action.*

Below : *Ashore !*

Below, right : *Some of the first troops to land.*





The amazing scene on the beachhead; the bay filled with Allied craft.

“All down the beaches there seemed to be these little ships, and leading to every point at which they lay were fresh lines, while over their heads the guns of the cruisers flashed and sent in destruction to the batteries and the strong-points which still remained.

“We withdrew from one beach and steamed through the incredible armada of liberation.

“In one long line I saw mail steamers from the South African run, Polish passenger vessels, Channel steamers from peace-time Dover and from the Irish Channel, great American merchant liners,

“For hours they were passing us, and when they had passed there were still other ships coming up astern, and this was only the beginning, for on each hand there were other swept channels, and down these, as we moved back to England, the fresh convoys were coming through.

“Tank landing ships that carry a load of five or six L.C.T.s pressed forward in steady lines, each escorted by destroyers or sloops or warships of one sort or another. There was never any end to them. As one convoy passed us we could see the leading ships of the next coming up over the horizon.

“The sheer size of it all was almost too great for the eye, too heavy for the imagination. There has never been anything like this in history; there are not words enough to describe its complexity, not adjectives enough to summon up for those who were not there its staggering immensity. Yet never anywhere, never for one moment, did I see the organization that lay behind it falter.

“Admiral Ramsay has done what few men in history have ever done; he has

achieved two miracles. At Dunkirk he achieved a miracle of improvisation ; on the Cherbourg Peninsula he has achieved a miracle of organization, planning and design so superb that I, who was there, stand humble before it.

“From the hour when we entered the swept channel to that fantastically dramatic moment of the dawn when the battle-

The troops move off. The first phase of the invasion—the landing—has been successfully accomplished.

ships and cruisers of the bombardment force came out of the mist to meet us at the very moment and at the very sea mile of the appointed place, past it to that other moment when the guns of that fleet and of the subsidiary ships opened fire to pulverise the Western Wall into a dusty memory, there was no shadow of confusion.

“As a feat of seamanship it was more than remarkable. Though I saw, first and last, between the embarkation beaches and

the coast of France and back from there again to the coast of England, thousands of ship movements, I did not see one single collision ; I saw no damage result from human failure.

“This was not a landing on an unoccupied coast ; it was not a landing, like the North African ones, against a half-hearted defence. It was a landing in face of the most resolute, most powerful and most brutal nation the world has ever known—a landing against every device which their ingenuity and resources could place against us.

“Yet in a single hour all that they could do had crumbled into helplessness. When the mine-sweepers, with their superb self-sacrifice, began the clearance of the mine-fields to let our armada through there began a saga of naval achievement the memory of which will live as long as men fight on the sea.”

A. D. DIVINE,

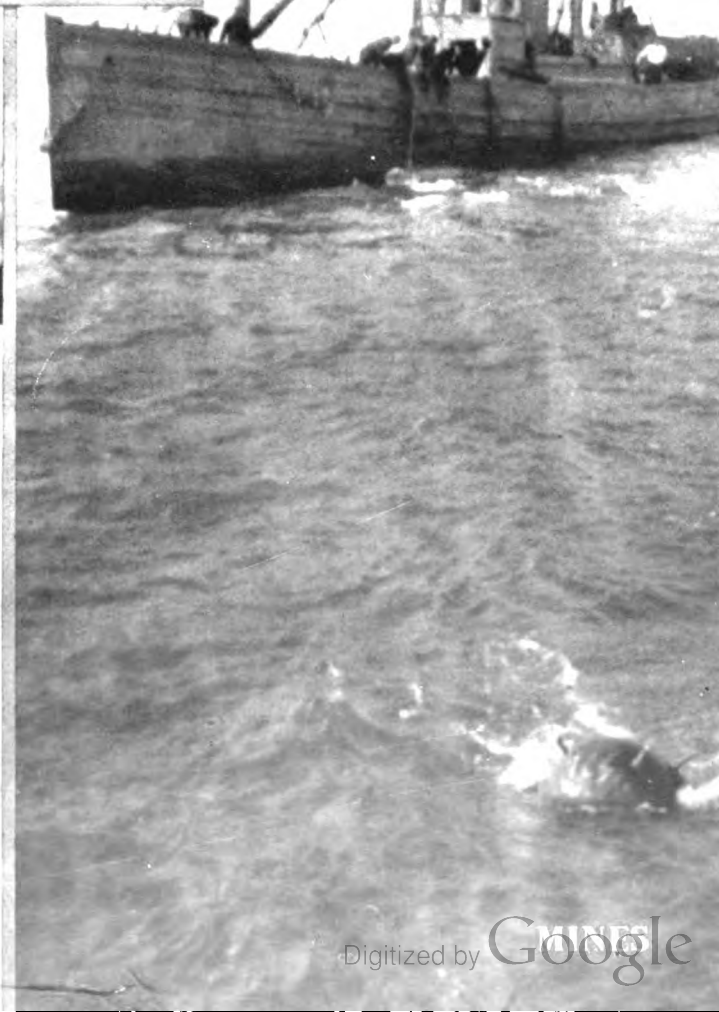
“Daily Sketch” War Correspondent.

ALL THE EVENTS recounted in the pages of this book were the indispensable prelude to the invasion and conquest of Nazi-held Europe. Without the long effort of the British Navy, the campaign of liberation in the west would not have been possible.



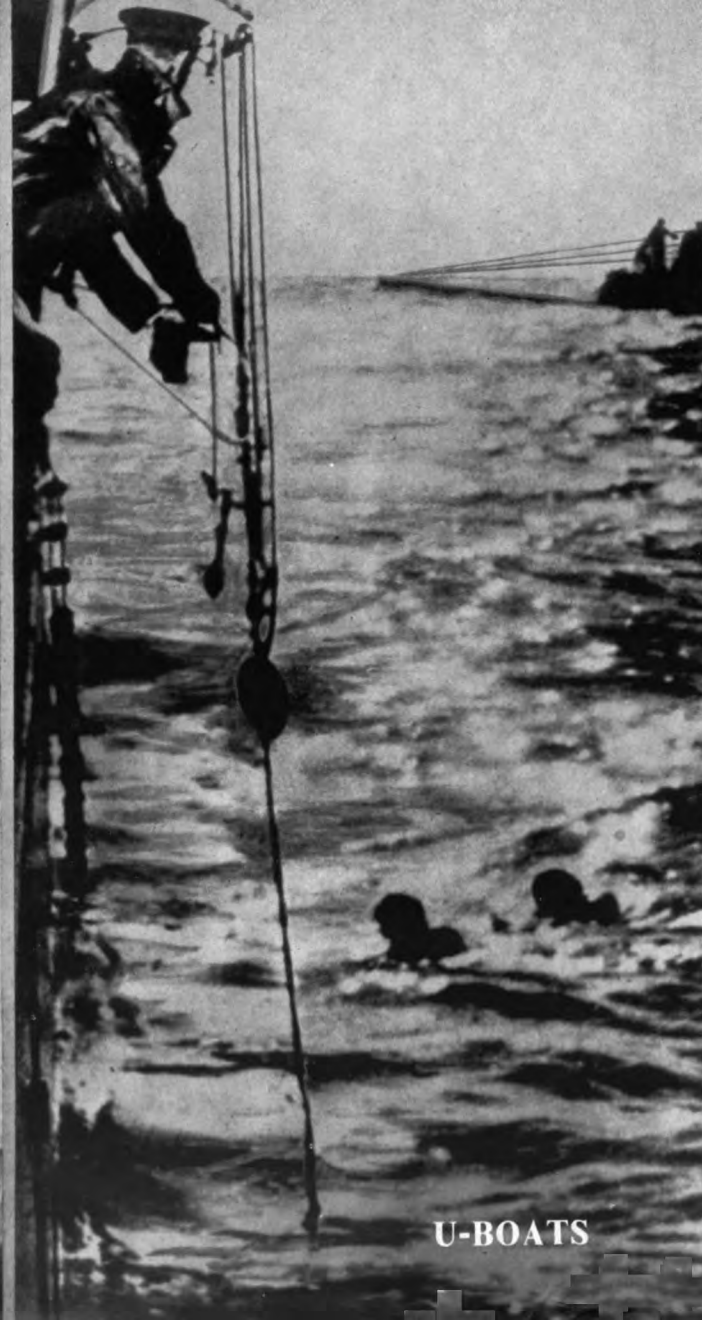
*... far more does it fall in the weeks and months
of ceaseless trial and vigilance on cold, dark, stormy
seas from whose waves at any moment death and
destruction may leap with sullen roar."*

THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL





AIR ATTACKS



U-BOATS



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